

UPDATE

More Americans Facing Blindness Than Ever Before

More Americans than ever are facing the threat of blindness from age-related eye disease. Over one million Americans aged 40 and over are currently blind and an additional 2.4 million are visually impaired. These numbers are expected to double over the next 30 years as the Baby Boomer generation ages. Blindness and visual impairment from most eye diseases and disorders can be reduced with early detection and treatment. Therefore, eye health education programs encourage those at high risk for eye disease to have regular dilated eye exams.

Leading Causes of Vision Impairment

Diabetic Retinopathy

Diabetic Retinopathy is believed to be a leading cause of blindness in the industrialized world in people between ages of 25 and 74. Diabetic retinopathy affects more than 5.3 million Americans age 18 or older. Nearly half of all people with diabetes will develop some degree of diabetic retinopathy during their lifetime and risk increases with age and duration of diabetes.

Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD)

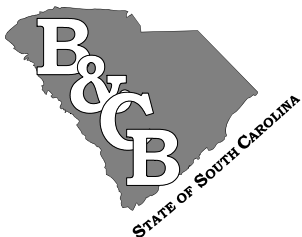
The most common cause of blindness and vision impairment in American's aged 60 and older. More than 1.6 million Americans over age 60 have advanced AMD. AMD is a condition that primarily affects the part of the retina responsible for sharp central vision.

Cataract

Cataract is the leading cause of blindness in the world. Cataract affects nearly 20.5 million Americans age 65 and older. Cataract is a clouding of the eye's naturally clear lens. Most cataracts appear with advancing age.

Glaucoma

Glaucoma is a chronic condition that often requires life-long treatment to control. About 2.2 million Americans have been diagnosed with glaucoma and another two million do not know they have it. Glaucoma is a disease that causes gradual damage to the optic nerve that carries visual information from the eye to the brain. In most cases, glaucoma can be controlled and vision loss slowed or halted. However, any vision lost to glaucoma cannot be restored.



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